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ABSTRACT

Since 1975, 300,000 Indochinese refugees have come to the United States. They continue to arrive at the rate of 14,000 per month. Although the efforts of the American government and people were laudable at the outset of Indochinese resettlement, the refugees have not been able to acculturate and become an integral part of American society. They have met with alienation and hostility and have, in self-defense, withdrawn into their ethnic enclave. Culture shock has taken a tremendous psychological toll on the refugees. Refugees have not been given equal opportunities for employment. Government funded Indochinese programs have in effect excluded Indochinese from obtaining positions in the higher echelon. Bilingual Indochinese educational programs have been sorely lacking in materials and personnel. The establishment of organizations to plan and implement assistance programs with Indochinese leadership and participation, a national policy that reflects the needs of the refugees, improved and expanded educational programs, and study of the factors leading to the success and failure of Indochinese resettlement can all help to begin to fulfill the needs of the refugees. (MK)

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"THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE INDOCHINESE IN AMERICA"

Delivered at the First National Conference on Indochinese Education and Social Services at the Hyatt House Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, March 28, 1980, by Dr. Vuong G. Thuy

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DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES FROM THE U.S. AND CANADA --

IT IS INDEED MY HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO ADDRESS YOU AT THIS FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDOCHINESE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES ORGANIZED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR VIETNAMESE AMERICAN EDUCATION, AN INDOCHINESE SELF-HELP PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION, AND WITH THE HELP OF, AND IN COOPERATION WITH, A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES. FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS SINCE THE FIRST INDOCHINESE REFUGEES LANDED IN THE UNITED STATES, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE SEEN SO MANY INDOCHINESE AND AMERICAN PROFESSIONALS GATHER IN ONE SINGLE CONFERENCE TO EXCHANGE NOTES AND DISCUSS THEIR CONCERNS. IN FACT, THIS KIND OF CONFERENCE SHOULD HAVE BEEN HELD A LONG TIME AGO BY FEDERAL AND RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES WITH FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES TO ADDRESS PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. REGARDLESS OF WHATEVER THE REASONS MAY BE, THIS KIND OF CONFERENCE IS CERTAINLY OVERDUE. AT ANY RATE, WE ARE EXTREMELY PLEASED THAT FINALLY THIS OVERDUE AND MUCH-NEEDED CONFERENCE HAS BECOME A REALITY. THEREFORE, WE WILL GATHER HERE FOR TWO DAYS TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER, TO SHARE OUR EXPERIENCES AND IDEAS, AND ESPECIALLY TO DISCUSS WAYS AND MEANS TO BETTER SERVE OUR NEWEST IMMIGRANTS: THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES.

EVEN THOUGH FIVE YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE FALL OF INDOCHINA, THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES HAVE KEPT ON COMING AT THE RATE OF 14,000 PER MONTH. THIS MEANS THAT OUR TASKS ARE FAR FROM BEING COMPLETED, AND IN FACT WE HAVE JUST BEGUN TO TACKLE NUMEROUS COMPLEX PROBLEMS. OUR RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE BECOME MORE AND MORE DEMANDING AND COMPLEX DUE TO THE VARIOUS ETHNIC, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

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OF THE NEW REFUGEES A GOOD NUMBER OF WHOM ARE KNOWN AS THE "BOAT PEOPLE". IN ADDITION TO THEIR TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES, AND ON THE WAY TO FREEDOM, THEY HAD TO LIVE FOR A LONG TIME, AND IN SOME CASES A NUMBER OF YEARS, IN MISERABLE CONDITIONS IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THEREFORE, THE NEEDS OF THE NEW REFUGEES CAN BE QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF THEIR PREDECESSORS. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW WITH YOU WHAT HAS HAPPENED OR BEEN DONE IN THE PAST AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THE FUTURE, AS I SEE IT, SO THAT WE CAN PROPOSE A FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR OUR DISCUSSIONS AT THIS CONFERENCE.

FIRST OF ALL, LET US LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDES OF THE RESETTLEMENT OF INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES SINCE 1975. NO ONE CAN DENY THE TREMENDOUS EFFORTS OF FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL, AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN BRINGING ABOUT THE FAIRLY SMOOTH RESETTLEMENT OF SOME 300,000 REFUGEES. ONE SHOULD ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WONDERFUL JOB AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DIFFERENT CHURCHES, INDOCHINESE SELF-HELF AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, AND PRIVATE CITIZENS THROUGHOUT AMERICA TO THE OVERALL EFFORT OF HELPING THE REFUGEES BEGIN THEIR NEW LIVES IN THIS GREAT AND AFFLUENT LAND. THE REFUGEES ARE GRATEFUL TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND ALL THOSE AGENCIES, CHURCHES, AND INDIVIDUALS FOR HAVING ASSISTED AND WARMLY WELCOMED THEM TO THIS LAND OF FREEDOM AND HOPE. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT IN THE HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES, SELDOM DID ONE NOTICE THE KIND OF EMOTIONAL TIE BETWEEN THE SPONSOR AND THE SPONSORED THAT IS COMMONLY FOUND BETWEEN INDOCHINESE REFUGEES AND THEIR AMERICAN SPONSORS. GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE MAJORITY OF THE REFUGEES WHO CAME HERE IN 1975 HAVE BEEN RESETTLED IN MATERIAL COMFORT AND ARE SELF-SUFFICIENT, IF NOT PROSPERING. ONLY A RELATIVELY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THESE REFUGEES ARE STILL ON WELFARE OR RECEIVING OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE. A GOOD

NUMBER OF REFUGEE FAMILIES NOW HAVE A TV, IF NOT A COLOR TV, ONE OR TWO CARS, AND ONE OR EVEN TWO HOUSES. FURTHERMORE, THE CHILDREN OF THE REFUGEES, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG ONES, HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN DOING QUITE WELL AT SCHOOL. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A SUCCESS STORY, AT LEAST FROM THE MATERIALISTIC POINT OF VIEW, AND IF SUCCESS IS MEASURED BY MATERIALISTIC POSSESSIONS ONLY. HOWEVER, IF SUCCESS IS MEASURED NOT ONLY BY MATERIALISTIC CRITERIA BUT ALSO BY SATISFACTION, EXPLOITATION OF THE REFUGEES' FULL POTENTIALITIES AND BY THE SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND LEADERSHIP BY THE REFUGEES IN THIS PLURALISTIC SOCIETY, THEN LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS IS NO DOUBT FAR FROM BEING A SUCCESS STORY.

EVEN THOUGH, THE OVERALL PICTURE OF THE REFUGEES' RESETTLEMENT LOOKS QUITE GOOD, THEIR NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS ARE, AS A MATTER OF FACT, FAR FROM BEING MET. LIKE ALL OTHER HUMAN BEINGS, THE REFUGEE HAS A VARIETY OF NEEDS. ONE HAS TO SATISFY THE BIOLOGICAL NEED FIRST, AND ONCE THIS NEED HAS BEEN MET, ONE WILL HAVE OTHER NEEDS TO MEET SUCH AS THE NEED FOR ACCEPTANCE AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION, ETC. THEREFORE, EVEN THOUGH HIS BIOLOGICAL NEED HAS BEEN SATISFIED, THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE HAS REPORTEDLY EXPERIENCED AND STILL IS EXPERIENCING A HOST OF DIFFICULTIES IN HIS EFFORT TO MAINSTREAM INTO THIS ALIEN CULTURE. THESE DIFFICULTIES STEM FROM THE SEVERE CULTURE SHOCK, THE SUDDEN CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL POSITION, AND THE UNFULFILLMENT OF NON-BIOLOGICAL NEEDS SUCH AS EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS. IN LIGHT OF THE LARGE GAP AND VAST DIFFERENCES IN TERMS OF LANGUAGE, VALUE SYSTEM, AND WAYS OF LIFE BETWEEN THE TWO CULTURES, AMERICAN AND INDOCHINESE, THE CULTURE SHOCK AFFECTING THE REFUGEES CAME AS NO SURPRISE TO US. THIS CULTURE SHOCK HAS TREMENDOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS ON THE REFUGEE, ESPECIALLY ON THE OLDER ONES. THE SUDDEN CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL POSITION OF THE REFUGEE CAUGHT HIM BY SURPRISE AND HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO COPE WITH THE NEW PROFESSIONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

DEMANDS. HE SUDDENLY FOUND HIMSELF TO BE NOT ONLY THE MINORITY, BUT ALSO THE THE MINORITY OF THE MINORITY OF THE AMERICAN PLURALISTIC SOCIETY. FOR MOST INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES, THE NOTION OF MINORITY-MAJORITY HAD NEVER EXISTED IN THEIR MINDS WHILE IN THEIR NATIVE LANDS, AND ONE HAS TO BE A MINORITY IN ORDER TO UNDER-STAND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MINORITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, FULL ADJUSTMENT IS SAID TO TAKE PLACE WHEN THE SYSTEMS OF VALUES AND PRACTICES OF THE HOST CULTURE CEASE TO BE A THREAT TO THE AFFECTED PEOPLE AND SUCH SYSTEMS OR PRACTICES ARE ACCEPTED OUT OF NECESSITY OR FREE CHOICE AS ALTERNATIVES. HOWEVER, RESEARCH HAS CLEARLY SHOWN THAT THE PEOPLE WHO ARE AFFECTED BY THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS DO NOT NECESSARILY ADOPT EVERY SYSTEM, VALUE, OR PRACTICE OF THE HOST CULTURE; BUT THEY USUALLY WELCOME THE NEW SYSTEM, VALUE, OR PRACTICE WHICH HELPS THEM TO ACHIEVE A SMOOTH ADJUSTMENT. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE WHEN THE CULTURE OF THE IMMIGRANTS IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE CULTURE OF THE HOST COUNTRY, AND ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO MORAL, SPIRITUAL OR RELIGIOUS VALUES AND PRACTICES OF THE IMMIGRANTS, AT LEAST THE FIRST OR SECOND GENERATION OF IMMIGRANTS. IN THE U.S. CONTEXT, THIS PHENOMENON IS CLEARLY REFLECTED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VARIOUS ETHNIC ENCLAVES FOUND IN AMERICAN CITIES, AND IT IS IN CONTRAST WITH THE DECEPTIVE AND OUT-OF-DATE THEORY OF THE "MELTING POT". ACCORDING TO THE TWO RENOWNED AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS, NATHAN GLAZER AND DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, IN THEIR BOOK BEYOND THE MELTING POT, THE MELTING POT WHICH IS BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF TOTAL ASSIMILATION IN FACT DOES NOT EXIST IN AMERICAN CITIES BECAUSE IMPORTANT ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN THESE CITIES DO MAINTAIN AND NURTURE THEIR DISTINCT CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITIES FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS. THEREFORE, LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE AMERICAN SOCIETY IS RECOGNIZED AS A REALITY, AND DIVERSITY IS HERE TO STAY. IT IS THIS DIVERSITY WHICH HAS MADE AMERICA UNIQUE AND RICH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY. IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY SUCH AS OURS, NATIONAL LOYALTY AND FULL PARTICIPATION

OF ALL CITIZENS CANNOT BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT HARMONY AND MUTUAL RESPECT BETWEEN VARIOUS ETHNIC GROUPS MAKING UP THIS SOCIETY. IN OTHER WORDS, UNITY IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED IN DIVERSITY, NOT IN UNIFORMITY. IN FACT, THE CONCEPT "UNITY IN DIVERSITY" IS NOT NEW TO US, ASIAN AMERICANS. IT IS ONE OF THE OLD ORIENTAL TEACHINGS WHICH HAS BEEN PASSED ON TO US FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE NEW CONCEPT OF THE "SALAD BOWL" NOT ONLY CAN PREVENT THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC RICHNESS BUT ALSO HELP NURTURE THE HARMONY, NATIONAL LOYALTY AND UNITY. THE "SALAD BOWL" CONCEPT ADVOCATES FULL PARTICIPATION OF ALL ETHNIC GROUPS IN PLURALISTIC SOCIETIES WHILE THESE GROUPS ARE STILL ABLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS THE DIFFERENT INGREDIENTS MAKING UP THE SALAD ARE STILL DISTINCTIVELY RECOGNIZABLE. FURTHERMORE, EDWARD T. HALL, THE FAMOUS AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST, COMPLAINED IN HIS BOOK THE HIDDEN DIMENSION THAT MINORITIES IN THE UNITED STATES "ARE TREATED AS THOUGH THEY WERE RECALCITRANT, UNDEREDUCATED, MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICANS OF NORTHERN EUROPEAN HERITAGE INSTEAD OF WHAT THEY REALLY ARE: MEMBERS OF CULTURALLY DIFFERENTIATED ENCLAVES WITH THEIR OWN COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, INSTITUTIONS AND VALUES." IN ADDITION, CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES HAVE CLEARLY INDICATED THAT THE MORE HOSTILE THE HOST CULTURE TO THE IMMIGRANT THE MORE HE WILL TEND TO WITHDRAW INTO HIS ETHNIC SHELL OR ENCLAVE FOR SELF-DEFENSE, THUS SLOWING DOWN THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS. THIS BEHAVIORIAL PATTERN HAS BEGUN TO EMERGE AMONG THE FIRST WAVE OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES, OF WHOM A GOOD NUMBER WERE ALREADY QUITE EDUCATED AND URBANIZED WHEN THEY CAME TO THE UNITED STATES. SHORTLY AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL, THEY VENTURED OUT OF THEIR ETHNIC SHELL TO EXPLORE THEIR NEW AND ALIEN WORLD AND SURROUNDINGS. WHEN THEY MET WITH ALIENATION AND, IN SOME CASES, HOSTILITY THEY WITHDREW INTO THEIR ETHNIC SHELL OR ENCLAVE. AS A RESULT, AND IN ADDITION TO OTHER REASONS, THE SECOND MIGRATION TOOK PLACE

WITH DAMAGING ECONOMIC, EMOTIONAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSQUENCES FOR A GOOD NUMBER OF AFFECTED REFUGEES. MANY EARLIER REFUGEES LEFT THEIR FIRST OR EVEN SECOND PLACE OF RESETTLEMENT TO MOVE TO A FEW LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF REFUGEES IN FLORIDA, TEXAS, LOUISIANA, AND PARTICULARLY CALIFORNIA, LEAVING EVERYTHING BEHIND FOR THE SAKE OF FEELING "AT HOME". THIS SHOWS THAT THE PLANNERS OF THE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS WERE IGNORANT OF, OR DID NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION, THE REAL NEEDS OF THE REFUGEES, CREATING FRUSTRATION AND DISAPPOINTMENT NOT ONLY FOR THE REFUGEES THEMSELVES BUT ALSO FOR THEIR AMERICAN SPONSORS AND ALL THOSE WHO HAVE TRIED SO HARD TO HELP THE REFUGEES ADJUST TO AMERICAN LIFE.

AT ANY RATE, THE TROUBLE WITH THE MELTING POT SYNDROME IS THAT WHILE THE MAJORITY SUPPOSEDLY WANTS THE MINORITIES TO BE MELTED, IN ORDER TO BE LIKE THEM, THESE MINORITIES ARE DEFINITELY NOT INVITED TO THE "POT" PARTY TO ENJOY THE GOODIES AND EQUAL TREATMENTS. IN THE AREA OF EMPLOYMENT AND PARTICULARLY AS FAR AS HUNDREDS OF FEDERALLY, STATE OR LOCALLY FUNDED INDOCHINESE PROGRAMS ARE CONCERNED, AND FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, WHAT WE HAVE USUALLY SEEN IS A KIND OF <u>COSMETIC DISPLAY</u> WITH HIGH ECHELON NON-INDOCHINESE ON TOP, AND LOW ECHELON INDOCHINESE AT THE MID OR LOW LEVELS. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE HAS BEEN A LACK OF INDOCHINESE PARTICIPATION OR REPRESENTATION IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITIES AT TOP LEVEL. THIS PRACTICE IS DEPLORABLE AND SHOULD BE CORRECTED IMMEDIATELY. IT IS ANTIDEMOCRATIC BECAUSE WHO ELSE CAN SERVE, AND KNOW HOW TO SERVE, THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES BETTER THAN THE INDOCHINESE THEMSELVES. IT IS ALSO AN ACT OF ARROGANCE BECAUSE WHEN BEING QUESTIONED ABOUT THE REASON FOR THIS KIND OF PRACTICE, THE PERSONS IN CHARGE OF THE SETTING UP OF THESE PROGRAMS USUALLY RESPONDED

THAT THE REASON WHY THEY DO NOT HAVE INDOCHINESE IN TOP POSITIONS IS BECAUSE THERE ARE NO QUALIFIED INDOCHINESE TO RUN THESE PROGRAMS. ONE HAS OFTEN HEARD OF THE ABOVE DECEPTIVE ARGUMENT WHICH WAS SOMETIMES USED EVEN BY THE MEDIA, AND ONE SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT THE RESETTLEMENT OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES HAS CREATED MANY NEW JOBS FOR AMERICANS AND INDOCHINESE ALIKE. A RECENT NATIONAL SURVEY OF VIETNAMESE RESOURCE PERSONNEL CONDUCTED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR VIETNAMESE AMERICAN EDUCATION CLEARLY INDICATES THAT THE ABOVE ARGUMENT IS NOT ONLY DECEPTIVE BUT ALSO INSULTING TO THE INDOCHINESE, BECAUSE 27% OF THE 170 SURVEYED VIETNAMESE PROFESSIONALS IN THE TWO FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES HAVE A DOCTORATE DEGREE, 41% HAVE A MASTER DEGREE AND 30% HAVE A BACHELOR DEGREE. WHO CAN SAY THAT THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS FROM INDO-CHINA?

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT DUE TO OUR VERY MEAGER RESOURCES, WE HAD TO LIMIT THE SCOPE OF OUR SURVEY TO VIETNAMESE EDUCATORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS. THIS BY NO MEANS WAS A THOROUGH SURVEY BECAUSE WE WERE UNABLE TO REACH EVERY VIETNAMESE EMPLOYED IN THE ABOVE TWO FIELDS. WE HOPE THAT IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND WITH MORE RESOURCES WE WILL BE ABLE TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF OUR SURVEY TO INCLUDE OUR CAMBODIAN, LAOTIAN, AND HMONG BROTHERS AND SISTERS. WE ARE VERY PROUD OF THIS IMPORTANT WORK BECAUSE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS A NATIONAL SURVEY OF VIETNAMESE RESOURCE PERSONNEL WAS COMPLETED <u>AT NO COST</u>, I REPEAT, <u>AT NO COST</u> TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OR TAXPAYERS. ORIGINALLY WE PLANNED TO PUBLISH THE RESULT OF THIS SURVEY IN A NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF VIETNAMESE RESOURCE PERSONNEL TO BE DISTRIBUTED AT THIS CONFERENCE, BUT UNFORTUNATELY DUE TO THE LACK OF MONEY AND MANPOWER, AND OTHER REASONS, WE DECIDED TO POSTPONE ITS PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION UNTIL AFTER THIS CONFERENCE. THIS DIRECTORY WILL BE VERY USEFUL FOR AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, OR INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESETTLEMENT, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE CONSTANT INFLUX OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES TO THE U.S. IT HELPS THEM IDENTIFY

RESOURCE PERSONNEL. THIS SURVEY IS DEFINITELY NECESSARY FOR THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY PROGRAMS AT ALL LEVELS. FEDERAL AGENCIES AND OTHERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESETTLEMENT OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES HAVE FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS FAILED TO DO THIS IMPORTANT BASIC WORK, THEREFORE, WE HAD TO DO IT OURSELVES WITH OUR OWN POCKET MONEY AND AT THE COST OF A FEW HUNDRED DOLLARS DONATED BY VIETNAMESE PROFESSIONALS THROUGHOUT THE U.S.

AT THIS POINT IN TIME, A GOOD NUMBER OF EARLIER OR NEW REFUGEES ARE STILL SUFFERING FROM THE ADJUSTMENT MALAISES: LANGUAGE BARRIER, JOB INSECURITY, LOW WAGES AND SALARIES, AND UNDER EMPLOYMENT, IF NOT UNEMPLOYMENT, BESIDES OTHER POSSIBLE PROBLEMS SUCH AS EMOTIONAL OR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS. THE PROBLEM OF UNDEREMPLOYMENT IS PARTICULARLY ACUTE, AT LEAST IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION. MANY WELL-TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS FROM INDOCHINA ARE PRESENTLY EMPLOYED AS TEACHER AIDES IN BILINGUAL PROGRAMS WITH MINIMUM SALARIES, THUS LOWERING THE STATUS AND RESPECT THAT INDOCHINESE TEACHERS TRADITIONALLY ENJOYED IN THEIR CULTURES. A GOOD NUMBER OF THEM HAVE LEFT TEACHING TO GET BETTER PAID JOBS IN OTHER FIELDS, CREATING A SEVERE SHORTAGE OF QUALITIFED TEACHERS TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF INDOCHINESE STUDENTS IN PUBLIC AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS. IN ADDITION TO THIS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR INDOCHINESE BILINGUAL OR NON BILINGUAL PROGRAMS ARE PRACTICALLY NON-EXISTENT, LEADING TO CONSTANT OUTCRIES FOR MATERIALS FROM DEVOTED EDUCATORS WORKING WITH INDOCHINESE REFUGEE CHILDREN AND ADULTS. THIS SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS AND MATERIALS SHOULD RECEIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION IF WE WANT TO IMPLEMENT QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE NEW IMMIGRANTS. NO ONE CAN DENY THE FACT THAT SO LITTLE MONEY WAS APPROPRIATED FOR THE PREPARATION OF INDOCHINESE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS. BESIDES, THE LACK OF INPUTS AND PARTICIPATION OF INDOCHINESE EDUCATION SPECIALISTS IN DIFFERENT PROCESSES SUCH AS DECISION MAKING, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION HAS OFTEN RESULTED IN POOR QUALITY AND IRRELEVANT MATERIALS, THUS WASTING OUR TAX MONEY.

IN OTHER WORDS, AS FAR AS INDOCHINESE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ARE CONCERNED, WE ARE STILL WHERE WE WERE FIVE YEARS AGO. THE COMMON PRACTICE OF BIDDING FOR FUNDING IS A POOR ONE BECAUSE GENERALLY SPEAKING THOSE WHO COME UP WITH WELL-WRITTEN PROPOSALS AND HAVE FRIENDS IN WASHINGTON SEEM TO HAVE A BETTER CHANCE TO WIN. THIS IN NO WAY GUARANTEES GOOD PRODUCTS AS MOST OF US, PROFESSIONALS, HAVE KNOWN. FURTHERMORE, MOST IF NOT ALL INDOCHINESE DO NOT HAVE THE NEEDED POLITICAL BACKINGS AND ARE NOT EQUIPPED OR TRAINED TO ENTER THIS KIND OF COMPETITION TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICES OR PRODUCTS TO THEIR OWN PEOPLES. SIMILAR SITUATIONS CAN BE FOUND IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SERVICES. JOB INSECURITY, LOW SALARY AND STATUS, AND LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES TO ASSUME LEADERSHIP DO NOT MAKE THIS FIELD ATTRACTIVE TO INDOCHINESE PROFESSIONALS. BETTER SERVICES CAN BE DELIVERED BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE ETHNIC KNOWLEDGE, AND PROPER INFORMATION OF THE POPULATION BEING SERVED.

ON THE NATIONAL SCENE, NONE OF US HAS FORGOTTEN THE REGRETTABLE RACIAL INCIDENTS IN SEADRIFT, TEXAS, AND DENVER, COLORADO, OR SIMILAR UGLY ENCOUNTERS ELSEWHERE. IT IS DEFINITELY NOT MY INTENTION, NOR IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO PASS ON JUDGEMENTS, AS WHO WAS RIGHT OR WHO WAS AT FAULT. HOWEVER, IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT ONE OF THE REASONS FOR SUCH RACIAL INCIDENTS IS THE LACK OF COMMUNICATION, MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT BETWEEN ALL THOSE INVOLVED. IT IS A WELL KNOWN FACT THAT MANY REFUGEES HAVE IRONICALLY AROUSED INDIGNATION FOR WORKING TOO HARD AND TOO SERIOUSLY, NOT TOO LITTLE, AND FOR TAKING UP JOBS NOBODY WANTS. A UNION OFFICIAL IN CHICAGO COMPLAINED THAT THE INDO-CHINESE WORKERS WERE MAKING THE REGULAR EMPLOYEES LOOK BAD. FURTHERMORE, GOVERNOR ROBERT RAY OF IOWA, FOR INSTANCE, SAID THAT EMPLOYERS IN HIS STATE CANNOT GET ENOUGH OF INDOCHINESE EMPLOYEES. THIS IS INTERESTING BECAUSE, IN FACT, REFUGEES HAVE BEEN BLAMED FOR WHAT THE AMERICANS HIGHLY VALUE, SUCH AS HARD WORK, THRIFT, SELF-SUFFICIENCY, AND GOOD BEHAVIOR. IN ADDITION,

PROBLEMS FACING THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT HAVE BEEN REAFFIRMED AGAIN AND AGAIN, BY PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY AND WITH RESPONSIBILITIES. PERMIT ME TO QUOTE MR. RICHARD CARVER, THE PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS, "THE REFUGEE IMPACT IS AN 'EMERGENCY SITUATION' DEMANDING 'PRIORITY' ATTENTION - ATTENTION THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SIMPLY ISN'T GIVING". FURTHERMORE, MR. CARVER INSISTED THAT SO FAR THE CITIES HAVE RECEIVED "ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY NO ASSISTANCE FROM THE ADMINISTRATION". BUREAUCRATS AND SPONSORING AGENCIES, HE CHARGED, ARE GUILTY OF A "DISGUSTING" DECEPTION OF THE PRESIDENT TO CONVINCE HIM THAT THE REFUGEES ARE BEING PROPERLY RECEIVED AND HOUSED WHEN THEY ARE NOT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT IS NOT MY INTENTION TO DRAW A DARK PICTURE OF THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES' RESETTLEMENT. WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO DO IS TO FOLLOW THE TEACHING OF THE GREAT MASTERS OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS; NAMELY, SOCRATES OF ANCIENT GREECE AND CONFUCIUS OF ANCIENT CHINA, THAT "THOU SHALT KNOW THYSELF FIRST BEFORE THOU CAN UNDERSTAND OTHERS AND THE UNIVERSE." SINCE YOUR PRESENCE HERE AT THIS CONFERENCE IS NO DOUBT AN ELOQUENT INDICATION OF YOUR GENUINE INTEREST IN HELPING INDOCHINESE REFUGEES FOR WHICH WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL, WE SHOULD BE HONEST WITH OURSELVES AND OTHERS BY LOOKING AT OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES NOT ONLY TO IMPROVE OUR ABILITIES TO SERVE BUT ALSO TO ACHIEVE OUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH. AFTER ALL, HONESTY IS DEFINITELY ONE OF THE AMERICAN VIRTUES. IT HAS BEEN WIDELY AGREED THAT THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN DOING BY THE SEAT OF PANTS, WITHOUT LONG-TERM PLANNING, SYSTEMATIC AND RESPONSIVE MECHANISM, PROPER INFORMATION, COORDINATION, AND INDOCHINESE REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION. IN OTHER WORDS, WE ARE JUST WINGING IT. AS THE AMERICANS SAY "THERE IS ALWAYS A BETTER WAY". THIS "BETTER WAY" CERTAINLY CANNOT BE FOUND WITHOUT SUFFICIENT REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION OF INDO-CHINESE, AT LEAST, IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AT ALL LEVELS. ALONG THE SAME LINE WE WELCOME THE CONCLUSIONS IN THE RECENT RESEARCH REPORT PUT OUT BY THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, THROUGH THEIR INDOCHINESE REFUGEE ACTION CENTER,

THAT "THE CRUCIAL ROLE WHICH INDOCHINESE SELF-HELP ORGANIZATIONS CAN PLAY IN THE PROCESS OF INDOCHINESE RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MUST BE CAREFULLY AND CREATIVELY NURTURED. THIS ROLE INCLUDES WORK IN SUCH VITAL AREAS AS JOB TRAINING, ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION, CULTURAL ORIENTATION, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH, AND MANY OTHER FACETS OF A SUCCESSFUL RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM". THIS REPORT ADDS THAT "IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT INDOCHINESE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY VIA THEIR INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS, BE ASSISTED AND ENCOURAGED IN PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT ROLE ALONGSIDE PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF THEIR COMMUNITY". IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT THE MORE RESPONSIBILITY PEOPLE HAVE THE MORE RESPONSIBLY THEY BEHAVE.

WE WERE LONELY IN OUR INITIAL EFFORT TO MAKE THIS LONG OVER-DUE AND MUCH NEEDED CONFERENCE A REALITY. WE APPROACHED ONE OF THE FEDERAL AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESETTLEMENT OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES NOT FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT BUT ONLY FOR MORAL SUPPORT, WE WERE FROWNED UPON AND MET WITH SUSPICION, WHILE IN CONTRAST WITH THIS ATTITUDE WE RECEIVED THE MORAL SUPPORT OF THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK SECRETARY HUFSTEDLER AND HER STAFF FOR THEIR TREMENDOUS MORAL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT. WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE MANY DIFFICULT OBSTACLES AHEAD OF US. WE KNOW THAT A GOOD NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND AGENCIES FEEL THREATENED BY OUR MERE EXISTENCE. WE WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE ALL THESE PEOPLE AND AGENCIES THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO WORK WITH THEM, NOT TO DO ANY HARM, BUT WE WOULD LIKE TO WORK WITH EVERYBODY ON NOTHING LESS THAN AN EQUAL FOOTING AND WITH MUTUAL RESPECT TO SERVE THE COMMON CAUSE. IN THE SPIRIT OF THE ABOVE REPORT OF THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE ACTION CENTER WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH ALL AGENCIES AND PEOPLE SERVING THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES TO WORK OUT A COMMON STRATEGY AND TO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS. WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GATHER, IF NOT ALL, THEN AT LEAST MOST WELL-KNOWN VIETNAMESE SPECIALISTS, IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND

SOCIAL SERVICES IN OUR ORGANIZATION. WE ARE VERY PROUD OF THIS ORGANIZATION BECAUSE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS A NATIONAL SELF-HELP PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION SET UP BY INDOCHINESE CAME INTO BEING TO SHOULDER AND SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SERVING THE NEEDS OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES. WE CHIPPED IN OUR OWN MONEY, TALENTS, AND TIME TO ORGANIZE THIS IMPORTANT CONFERENCE. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH WHAT IS GOING ON AT THIS CONFERENCE IS IMPORTANT, WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THIS CONFERENCE IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT AND CRUCIAL. WE KNOW THAT WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DO OUR JOB WELL WITHOUT THE COOPERATION AND SUPPORT FROM PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY FROM FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES. WE DO NOT HAVE ANY AMBITIONS OTHER THAN TRYING TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND NEEDED. THIS IS A REAL CHALLENGE, AND AFTER ALL, ANYTHING WHICH IS NOT CHALLENGING IS NOT INTERESTING TO THE TRUE PROFESSIONAL.

TO CONCLUDE MY HUMBLE REMARKS, PERMIT ME TO PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING:

1. THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEE AFFAIRS.
2. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PLAN TO ASSURE THE NATIONAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION OF ALL INDOCHINESE AND NON-INDOCHINESE AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS INVOLVED IN THE RESETTLEMENT OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES.
3. THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL TRAINING AND RESOURCE CENTER MAKING MAXIMUM USE OF THE SKILLS AND TALENTS OF INDOCHINESE AND OTHER INTERESTED PROFESSIONALS.
4. A CLEARLY DEFINED COMPREHENSIVE AND CONSISTENT NATIONAL POLICY ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WHICH REFLECTS THE CONCERNS AND INTERESTS OF THE NEW IMMIGRANTS.
5. ACTIVE LEADERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION OF INDOCHINESE IN ALL INDOCHINESE PROGRAMS AND IN EVERY ORGANIZATION OR ADVISORY COUNCIL WITH INTEREST IN INDOCHINESE AFFAIRS SUCH AS <u>THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS</u> AND <u>THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION</u> (ON WHICH THERE IS NO INDOCHINESE REPRESENTATIVE).

6. THE SETTING UP OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH LEADERSHIP AND INPUTS IN ALL STAGES BY THE MEMBERS OF THE INDOCHINESE COMMUNITY TO RETRAIN INDOCHINESE TEACHERS AND PREPARE QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR THE INDOCHINESE SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN.
7. CITIZEN'S EDUCATION FOR CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING PROGRAMS FOR INDOCHINESE AND NON-INDOCHINESE PARENTS, RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO BRIDGE DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS IN MIXED RACIAL COMMUNITIES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE RACIAL HARMONY AND TO AVOID FUTURE RACIAL INCIDENTS. INDO-CHINESE SELF-HELP ORGANIZATIONS CAN PLAY A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THIS CRUCIAL EFFORT.
8. A MEANINGFUL AND COHESIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM TO EXAMINE THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE SUCCESS AND/OR FAILURES OF INDOCHINESE RESETTLEMENT AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT WITH A VIEW OF DEVISING FUTURE PLANS AND PROGRAMS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WITHOUT DRAMATIC CHANGES AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN ALL PHASES OF INDO-CHINESE IN THEIR RESETTLEMENT, THE AMERICAN DREAM WILL NEVER BE FULLY MATERIALIZED FOR THE INDOCHINESE AND IT WILL CERTAINLY BECOME A SLOGAN OF EMPTY WORDS.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND SUPPORT. HAVE A GOOD CONFERENCE.

To obtain additional copies, please write to:

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